
CSE 374

Programming Concepts & Tools

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Lecture 16 – Version control and svn

Where we are

- Learning tools and concepts relevant to multi-file, multi-person, multi-platform, multi-month projects
- Today: Managing source code
 - Reliable backup of hard-to-replace information (i.e., sources)
 - Tools for managing concurrent and potentially conflicting changes from multiple people
 - Ability to retrieve previous versions
- Note: None of this has anything to do with code. Like make, version-control systems are typically not language-specific.
 - Many people use version control systems for everything they do (code, papers, slides, letters, drawings, pictures, . . .)
 - Traditional systems were best at text files (comparing differences, etc.); newer ones work fine with others too
 - But be sure to check before storing videos & other media

Version-control systems

- There are plenty: scss (historical), rcs (mostly historical), cvs (built on top of rcs), subversion, git (much more distributed), mercurial, sourcesafe, ...
- The terminology and commands aren't particularly standard, but once you know one, the others aren't difficult – the basic concepts are the same
- svn was the most widely used for the last decade and is still common – we'll learn basic svn
- git and mercurial are the hot new thing – distributed version control
 - Same core ideas, but more complicated to support independent development and merging of projects

The setup

- There is a svn *repository*, where files (and all past versions) are reliably stored
 - Hopefully the repository files are backed up, but that's not svn's problem
- You do **not** edit files in the repository directly. Instead:
 - You check-out a *working copy* and edit it
 - You commit changes back to the repository
- You use the svn program to perform any operations that affect the repository
- One repository may hold many projects. A subversion repository is just a database of projects and files.
 - Looks like a filesystem tree of project directories

Tasks

Learn the common cases; look up the uncommon ones.

In a production shop...

- Create
 - a repository (rare – every few years)
 - a new project (infrequent – once or twice a year)
 - a working copy of a project (every few weeks or months?)
- Working with files
 - Get updates, add or remove files, commit changes to repository (daily)
 - Check version history, differences (as needed)
- Branches, locks, watches, others (every now and then)

Basic command structure is the same for all

`svn svn-options cmd cmd-options files...`

Repository access

A repository can be:

- Local: specify repository directory root via a regular file path name url (file:///path...)
- Remote: lots of remote protocols supported (ssh, https, ...) depending on repository configuration
 - Specify user-id and machine
 - Usually need svn and ssh installed locally
 - Need authentication (ssh password or other)
- HW6 uses https access to remote server
- Feel free to experiment with private, local repos

Getting started

- Set up a repository (we'll do this for you on hw6; if you do it yourself you get to pick name, location)
 - `svnadmin create path/svnrepos`
- Put initial version of project directory in repository (do this once!)
 - `svn import projdir svn://path/svnrepos/proj -m msg`
 - Commands that update a repository require a message (*msg*) that should briefly document the change
 - Once a project is imported, **never** use the original directory again (never! We really mean that!)
 - Path depends on kind of access (local/remote)
- Check out a copy of the project to a *working directory*
 - `cd working-directory`
 - `svn checkout svn://path/svnrepos/proj proj`
 - Working directory remembers repository location and password for future checkin, update, etc.
- HW6: path to repository server is on cse server – see writeup

File manipulation

- Add files with `svn add` (won't be in repository if you don't)
- Bring local working copy up to date with `svn update` (get changed files from repository)
- Commit local changes with `svn commit`
 - Any number of files including subdirectories recursively if no filename specified
 - Files not actually added to repository until commit
- Commit messages are mandatory
 - `-m` “short message”
 - `-F` filename-containing-message
 - Else pop up editor if `EDITOR` or `VISUAL` environment variable is set
 - Else complain

Some examples

- Update local working directory to match repository
 `svn update`
- Make changes (do via svn, not mv, cp, so repository will also change on commit)
 `svn add file.c`
 `svn move oldfile.c newfile.c`
 `svn delete obsoletefile`
- Commit changes
 `svn commit -m "this is much better, fixes bug 31415"`
- Examine your changes
 `svn status`
 `svn diff file.c`
 `svn revert file.c`

Conflicts

- This all works great if there is one working-copy. With multiple working-copies there can be conflicts:
 1. Your working-copy checks out version 17 of foo
 2. You edit foo
 3. Somebody else commits a new version (18) of foo
- Subversion tries to merge changes automatically; if it can't you must resolve the conflict. If svn commit fails:
 - Do svn update to get repository version and attempt merge
 - “G” means the automatic merge succeeded
 - “C” means you have to resolve the conflict
 - Merging is line-based, which is why svn is better for text files
 - Conflicts indicated in the working-copy file (search for <<<<<<)
 - Recent versions of svn handle more of this automatically or interactively

svn gotchas

- Do not forget to add files or your group members will be very unhappy.
- Keep in the repository *exactly* (and *only*) what you need to build the application!
 - Yes: foo.c foo.h Makefile
 - No: foo.o a.out
 - You don't want versions of .o files etc.:
 - Replaceable things have no value
 - They change a lot when .c files change a little
 - Developers on other machines can't use them

Summary

- Another tool for letting the computer do what it's good at:
 - Much better than manually emailing files, adding dates to filenames, etc.
 - Managing versions, storing the differences
 - Keeping source-code safe
 - Preventing concurrent access, detecting conflicts
- svn: full documentation is online, free, downloadable
<http://svnbook.red-bean.com/>
 - Chapters 1 & 2 have most of what you'll need